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DISCUSSION
COLLEGE ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS IN FRENCH
AND GERMAN¹

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The New England Association of Modern Languages passed at its last session, after thorough discussion, by a vote in which there were but three dissenting, a resolution that the colleges be asked to put French and German on an equality, as regards marks and importance in the college entrance examination, with Greek and Latin. That seems at first a somewhat startling proposition. I have no hesitation in saying that personally I am strongly in favor of it, and I wish to remind you, when I say that, that I am a classical teacher, that I earn my bread by teaching Latin and Greek, and that there is no subject in the world that I love to teach so much as Greek; but we are confronted by a situation which is extremely interesting and it seems to me is going to be critical. There is no question that Greek is going out very fast in secondary schools. It is disappearing very rapidly, I have the best authority for saying, from the high schools of Massachusetts; and Massachusetts is the stronghold of the study of Greek in schools in this country. I personally believe that in two or three decades the study of Greek will be entirely eliminated from the public high schools of this and other states. It is not quite the same with regard to Latin. At first it seems to be the very opposite. There are more persons studying Latin now than ever before. The number has rapidly increased within a few years in the country generally. But I have said before, and I repeat, my own conviction is that, though Latin was never studied by so many persons as now, it was never so little studied as it is now. If Greek is likely at no distant time to be eliminated from the public high schools, if Latin is struck with dry rot, as I believe it is, and will continue to decay unless we can find some remedy for the existing condition of things, especially through a larger allotment of time for Latin, what are we going to do, Ladies and Gentle-

¹ A portion of the discussion of the motion that, "It is the sense of this meeting that the question whether greater relative weight should be given to modern foreign languages in college entrance examinations should enter into the programme of this Association (the New England Association of Colleges and Preparatory Schools) next year."

men? What is going to take the place of these traditional subjects in the training in language? It seems to me it is plain that we have got to do the best we possibly can with German and French.

It is true that Greek and Latin are to a large extent protected studies and subsidized studies. That protection and the subsidy cannot be expected very long to continue, and therefore it behooves us to consider—and consider in time, so that we shall have season for deliberation—what is best under the circumstances to do. I am not aware, Mr. President, that in any college in the land Greek or Latin is specially protected. So far as I know, and I think it must be true universally, the modern languages, French and German, and other modern languages, occupy a position of equality in colleges with Latin and Greek; but we see this astonishing anomaly that it is not so in the preparatory schools.